



VICTORY TOUR DEVELOPMENT



CONGRESSMAN JERRY WELLER

Enclosures:

- Victory Tour Development explanation form
- Best Practices document providing additional information

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Victory Tour Development – Office of Congressman Jerry Weller (IL-11)

1. An almost essential requirement is to have developed a close working relationship with the local Chamber of Commerce or economic development organization.
 - * This should be a natural relationship for virtually every Republican Member of Congress because of a shared economic ideological perspective in terms of tax cuts, trade promotion, free market approaches to health care, liability reform, etc. Hopefully, the Member and/or staff has been meeting periodically with the executive boards of these groups and attending their events on a regular basis.
 - * Any effective Chamber or local business organization will have a detailed knowledge of its business community – what the businesses do; which ones are growing; which ones are facing challenges, etc. – plus have the right contact information immediately at hand.
 - * The executive directors of these business groups are likely to be appreciative of both the opportunity to do a favor for the Member plus the chance to enhance his or her personal relationship as the ED will likely travel with the Member during the tour. In addition, this is an opportunity for the executive director to strengthen his/her image within the business organization or to demonstrate his “clout” by providing key business group members with direct access to the Member of Congress.
2. The members of the local media are almost always interested
 - * The concept is an unique one – giving the local media the opportunity to see the impact of national policy at the community level.
 - * Accompanying the tour gives the local media access to major industries and prominent business figures which the media representatives perhaps could not achieve on its own.
 - * During the course of the tour, the local media representatives will have fairly lengthy access to the Member of Congress.
 - * Oftentimes, because they deal with them on a very frequent basis, the executive director of the local business group will have developed a close relationships with the local media (the newspaper, radio or TV station may well be a Chamber member) and should be allowed to promote the tour with their media contacts in addition to the media efforts made by the Member’s communication staff.
3. The tour can be organized very efficiently in terms of Congressional Office resources.
 - * The staff of the business group will quite likely put the entire tour together – taking care of everything from the initial contacts to finalizing the itinerary.
 - * Oftentimes, the business groups will even pick up the cost of any meals plus the transportation – leaving the tour with virtually no impact on the office MRA.

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4. The first step after convincing the business organization to put together a tour is discuss with the business group staff the parameters of the tour.
 - * The primary purpose of the tour is to showcase just how the actions of the Republican Congress have translated into new jobs and economic growth at home.
 - * Given the prominence of energy in the minds of constituents, the primary focus should be on finding specific examples of how the comprehensive energy legislation passed in 2005 has spurred growth or the development of additional energy resources – more bio-fuels or other alternative energy options; energy conservation steps taken by businesses; new energy research opportunities, etc. Congressman Weller was successful in finding a company which makes insulation for nuclear plants and has added a significant number of new employees because of the increased interest in expanding the nuclear industry.
 - * Other success stories may be found in the areas of increased exports due to the promotion of trade agreements such as DR-CAFTA or just general growth due to some aspect of the Bush tax cuts.
 - * Of course, even if direct links to successful actions of the Republican Congress are difficult to establish, it certainly will not hurt any Member to be seen meeting with local business leaders and listening to the challenges they face; spending time greeting workers and building a stronger relationship with local business organizations.
5. The tour can be organized in a simple yet effective manner.
 - * Even a half day schedule should permit visits to at least three businesses. The visit format should include some time to sit down and speak with the company leadership (be sure to give them the chance to voice their concerns and state the challenges facing their business or industry) followed by a tour of the business facility.
 - * Consider including a breakfast, lunch or dinner with community business leaders invited by the Chamber. Try to get the Chamber to invite at least some new people not yet acquainted with the Member.
 - * Consider organizing a tour in each of the District's major media markets as each of these will likely have their own local Chamber of Commerce.



BEST PRACTICES

A GUIDE TO WHAT'S WORKING

CHAIRMAN DEBORAH PRYCE SECRETARY JOHN T. DOOLITTLE

VICTORY TOUR DEVELOPMENT

MEMBER: REP. JERRY WELLER

STAFF CONTACT: REED WILSON, DISTRICT DIRECTOR

ABOUT THIS EVENT:

Congressman Jerry Weller utilizes his close working relationship with local Chambers of Commerce or economic development organizations to further develop his relations with local businesses throughout his district. The primary purpose of these tours are to showcase how the actions of the Republican Congress translate into new jobs and economic growth at home.

PREPARATION

Who is involved?

District staff.

Are any outside groups involved?

Local Chamber of Commerce or economic development organizations and local businesses.

Timeframe for preparation:

Developing relationships take time. Members and staff should meet with the local Chamber of Commerce and local businesses on a regular basis. Preparation depends on the type and length of tour.

PRESS COMPONENT

What press did you invite?

Local media.

What went into your press plan for the event?

Allowing the local media to attend the local business tour allows them to see the impact of national policy as well as gain access to major industries and prominent business figures which they may not be able to achieve on their own.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

How often do you hold this event?

Each year the Congressman's goal is to do one tour in each of his five media markets.